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DPKO Practices in Gender Mainstreaming

by Kateland Shane [Mine Action Information Center]

Following the adoption in 2000 of *Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*,¹ the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat began mainstreaming gender perspectives into all of their peacekeeping operations. Within DPKO, the United Nations Mine Action Service maintains its own guidelines to help U.N. personnel mainstream gender considerations into all mine-action programs.

The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations was developed to “help countries torn by conflict create the conditions for lasting peace.”² DPKO personnel, or United Nations peacekeepers, are deployed to conflict-ridden areas to help stabilize the conflict and establish peaceful conditions. Ever since their first mission in 1948, peacekeepers have carried out a total of 63 field missions, bringing fair and free elections to over 45 countries, resulting in the disarmament of over 400,000 ex-combatants.³ At present, DPKO is working in 18 countries and territories,⁴ and employs the expertise of military personnel, administrators, economists, police officers, legal experts, deminers, gender affairs officers, human rights monitors, humanitarian workers and others to deliver effective peacekeeping operations.² Mine action is included in the peacekeeping operations of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, home to the United Nations Mine Action Service.⁵

UNMAS “seeks to ensure an effective, proactive and coordinated United Nations’ response to the landmine contamination, through collaboration with the United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programs.”⁶ UNMAS chairs the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, a forum of 13 other U.N. agencies, departments, funds and programs, that was developed to coordinate the United Nations’ response to the international landmine and unexploded ordnance problem.⁶

Gender Mainstreaming

During the 1990s, war crimes against women during conflicts in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia prompted the United Nations to take action and establish policies to mainstream



gender perspectives into peacekeeping operations.⁷ The result was U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325.⁷ The resolution calls for the mainstreaming of gender considerations into all peacekeeping operations in order to address the different ways conflict affects men and women, and to recognize the contributions of both genders to peace and security.

Since the adoption of Resolution 1325, DPKO has taken several steps to mainstream gender perspectives, including the appointment of gender advisers in all peacekeeping operations and in UNDPKO headquarters,⁶ and the development of a body of resource and guidance material, available on the DPKO Best Practices Web site.^{8,9} To help guide gender practices, UNMAS also developed a publication in 2007, *Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes*, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action.¹⁰ These guidelines have been field piloted and will be revised in 2009 based on feedback received.

UNMAS Guidelines

The United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action developed guidelines to mainstream gender perspectives into relevant aspects of United Nations mine-action programs, including mine clearance, mine-risk education and victim assistance. *Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes* incorporates real examples of mine-action gender mainstreaming from mine-action programs around the world.

Mine Clearance. Men, women, boys and girls differ in their exposure to and knowledge of the mine contamination in a community. Keeping these differences in mind, mine-action operators should try to obtain information about the mine situation from both genders in all age groups for accurate survey, mapping and clearance. To achieve this goal, the United Nations has three recommendations:

- Gather data at times and locations suitable for all individuals.
- Gather data from both men and women about the location of the contamination and the projected use of cleared land.

- Try to include both men and women on survey and clearance teams.⁹

Mine-risk education. People of different genders and ages also differ in their behaviors and their response to mine-risk education. To address these differences, mine-action personnel should take an approach to MRE that will reach both sexes. The United Nations has six guidelines in the area of mine-risk education:

- Gather data that will illustrate the at-risk behaviors of both genders.
- Gather data that will show the attitudes held by both genders toward potential mine and UXO threats.
- Determine the best messenger that will effectively convey MRE messages to both genders.
- Hold MRE meetings at times and places convenient for all individuals, not just one gender or age group.
- Ensure that both genders comprehend MRE messages presented.
- Include both male and female instructors.⁹

Victim Assistance. Mine-action operators should also consider gender when delivering effective victim assistance to both men and women. In some communities, women may have more trouble accessing medical assistance due to cultural barriers and other obstacles. Mine-action operators should also consider that both male and female mine/

UXO survivors are vulnerable to the economic, psychological and social consequences of disabling injuries. To ensure effective victim assistance for both genders, *Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes* recommends that mine-action personnel:

- Collect, record and evaluate age- and sex-disaggregated data that will reveal mine/UXO survivors’ needs and access to services.
- Support mine/UXO survivor advocacy and awareness.
- Try to include both male and female workers on victim-assistance teams.⁹

Conclusion

Conflicts and their aftermaths affect men, women, boys and girls differently. Taking gender differences into consideration in peacekeeping activities such as mine-action can help ensure that all people enjoy equal access to assistance programs and can participate in decision-making processes in their communities. Although the guidelines in *Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes* were created specifically for United Nations mine-action programs, these guidelines may provide a helpful model to other mine-action entities, including national authorities looking to include gender considerations in mine-action programs. ♦

See Endnotes, page 113



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News Brief

World's First Double Arm Transplant Performed on German Man

In July of 2008, 54-year-old German Karl Merk, who lost both of his arms in a farming accident six years earlier, received the world's first double arm transplant at Munich University. The procedure, which took around 15 hours, required five different teams of medical experts. In total, there was a staff of around 40 surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses and others who assisted in the transplant. The surgery was considered to be a success and at this time, the doctors are evaluating Merk's psychological reaction to having these new arms. In terms of transplanting body parts, psychological factors play a major part considering that many patients end up rejecting the new body part because it feels alien to them. Merk is currently going through strong psychological treatment and has his family for a strong support system.